

The Advocate

40 years

Celebrating the Journey

Turning 40 is a momentous event in anyone's life. For Christchurch Women's Refuge it's a wonderful opportunity to not only look back at our origins and the great legacy that has been entrusted to us, but to look forward to where we as an agency – and as a community – are heading.



CEO Nicola Woodward

In this newsletter you'll meet Rosemary Howard and Diane Shannon, two of the courageous women who 40 years ago founded New Zealand's first Refuge from family violence, right here in Christchurch. Their stories of the fiery determination and commitment it took to turn the tide on domestic violence in the '70s reflect an era where the women's liberation movement spurred the changes we often now take for granted.

Today, overcoming the violence that damages relationships, families and communities can become a reality for everyone who is willing to leave violence behind and begin the journey towards a violence-free lifestyle. That journey starts with the very first step and our ever-widening options of support for women, children and men offer individuals and families a range of self-determining choices. Inside, you'll read about how Specialist Peer Support is honouring those with lived experience of family violence and drawing on their knowledge and experience to walk alongside others on their path to violence-free futures.



1970's shot of two of our founding members Diane Shannon (left) and Rosemary Howard (right), on the deck of New Zealand's first refuge

I am always mindful of the immense privilege it is to be part of this ever-evolving organisation, which is committed to making violence-free futures a reality for all New Zealanders. In 40 years family violence has gone from something private and shrouded to something talked about as a community issue, where those who have overcome family violence can now stand up and be proud of that achievement and use their experience to give hope and inspiration to others.

You can be part of this journey too – supporting children, women and men to live free from violence. Please take the chance to offer your support during our upcoming Annual Appeal (more details inside). We desperately need collectors to cover all areas of the city and, as ever, we rely on you for your support. Please, make a donation if you can, or volunteer your time to help us collect. Together we can make a difference.

Nicola Woodward
CEO

Radical! Provocative! ... and Even a Little Wicked!

As we celebrate the 40-year anniversary of Christchurch Women's Refuge this year, we took the chance to catch up with two of the agency's founding members – Rosemary Howard and Diane Shannon. The story of what drove them to open New Zealand's first refuge (and the third in the world) is a powerful backdrop to the evolution of our new approach to family violence services today.

Rewind 40 years. It's the early 1970s and Rosemary and Diane are both young married women, Rosemary with children. Nothing unusual about that, but Diane and Rosemary were anything but typical of most women of their era. Heavily involved in the second wave of feminism that had captured their hearts and minds, Rosemary and Diane were university educated, social activists; some might even say they were 'hell-bent' on bringing about radical social change. They challenged some of the fundamental beliefs society accepted or turned a blind eye to – and they didn't mind how much they 'rocked the boat' to achieve change.

"We were seeing beaten women and terrified children – we weren't going to turn our backs."

At the time they were living communally in Christchurch's Chippenham Community, where families sharing similar alternative-society visions came together in a large historic (1862) house. Their connections with various women's groups, including Radical Feminists; Christchurch Women's Liberation; Socialist Feminists; and the lesbian Sisters for Homophile Equality, established a Women's Centre in 1971 at 249 Kilmore Street.

"The Women's Centre was a great place for women to meet and it attracted women from all walks of life" says Rosemary. But before long it began attracting women seeking a shelter from family violence. "It was never our original intention to start a 'Safe House'; it was born out of need and out of other women prepared to do something about that need as well."



1973 – A woman and her child find Refuge from domestic violence in New Zealand's first Safe House on Kilmore Street, Christchurch

Rosemary, Diane and women of the various women's groups they were associated with rented the adjoining house of 251 Kilmore Street and paid for it themselves, so that women who needed a safe place could find refuge there. When the need for another 'more confidential' home became evident, Diane and Rosemary set about to do their best to 'persuade' the City Council to give them a house. "The first reaction was an outright No!" remembers Rosemary. "But I went back day after day and sat in their offices until they said Yes just to get rid of me!" The second house was located in Hastings Street.

At the time Diane and Rosemary knew little of domestic violence, but along with their youth came passion and a gutsy determination to make things happen. "I think people assumed we were angry, outspoken women who had come from violent relationships ourselves" recalls Diane. "But we hadn't; we came from strong feminist beliefs that all women deserved equality, to be safe and treated with respect. We were seeing beaten women and terrified children – we weren't going to turn our backs. If we thought a woman shouldn't put up with abuse and she should leave, we were quick to say so."

That didn't go down too well in an era where people preferred not to meddle in domestic problems and to keep family issues private, behind closed doors. Diane explains, "Refuge alarmed some people who saw us as home-wreckers – but we just wanted women to be self-determining about their own choices, not to have roles imposed on them. There was no other support available for women living with violence, as there is now, and we didn't see the point of patching things up and

"It was never our original intention to start a 'Safe House'; it was born out of need and out of other women prepared to do something about that need as well."

sending them back for more abuse. We encouraged women to examine their situation and to develop their own view."

Family violence wasn't something written about in the media, or even considered a social issue in the '70s Rosemary says. "Police then simply were not interested in 'domestics'. It was a very long and arduous journey to get them to take it seriously, but we took it on with gusto. There were women and children in dangerous and desperate situations turning up at the Kilmore Street house. We wanted to raise awareness in the community that domestic violence wasn't something that should stay behind closed doors any more. We talked to community groups like Rotary, Lions, and Zonta to advocate on behalf of all women. Eventually Police began to change tack. They started taking us seriously, and even invited us to speak to their staff."

It was communal living that freed Diane and Rosemary to be involved in what they were really passionate about – actively pursuing equality for women in the form of equal rights, equal pay and access to childcare. "We could live cheaply communally" Rosemary recalls. "We had our own printing press for flyers, a farm and our own bakery (Vital Foods). The

The Personal Touch of Peer Support

Isn't it a great feeling when you meet someone who's been through a similar experience to you? The sense that here is a person who gets you, who understands what it's really like ...

Specialist Peer Support offers that kind of understanding when it comes to family violence. It's a unique connection made through the authentic voice of 'lived experience'. For those on the challenging journey of moving away from family violence a 'peer' can offer the inspiration and genuine support they need because Peer Support Specialists have themselves travelled that same pathway – they represent hope and the tangible evidence that a life free from violence is achievable.

Developing our Specialist Peer Support service for both women and men is Beryl Brogden. Beryl's combination of her own personal story of family violence, a Bachelor of Applied Sciences in Psychology and three and a half years as Christchurch Women's Refuge Safe House Co-ordinator are the driving forces behind her passion for peer support.

"Peer support is founded on mutual understanding, acceptance and trust" says Beryl. "There are no assessments or pre-determined outcomes to define this relationship. A Peer Supporter isn't going to tell a person how to 'fix' things, but they will offer the time to share and explore the experience of family violence in their own way and in their own time."

A Peer Supporter can also see the potential wellbeing of the whole person, not just the family violence. "Very often a person affected by family violence has been so focussed on the damage, that they've lost connection with their own hopes and dreams for life" explains Beryl. "It's easy to get stuck by thoughts that 'this is my lot' and 'nothing will change'. Over time a Peer Supporter can encourage the client to identify and take hold of the future they want; to perceive that it can be different and that they have the potential to create that change; and to believe that overcoming family violence can become their reality."

Having supported many women through crisis situations at the Safe House, Beryl is keen to see a continuum of quality support available to those wanting to overcome family violence in the community. She believes Specialist Peer Support adds yet another layer to the dynamic support already offered by Christchurch Women's Refuge. "We want to see people not only surviving family violence, but beginning



Specialist Peer Support provides hope and inspiration to those wanting to leave family violence behind

to recognise and develop their own self-worth, their inner strength and their ability to thrive beyond family violence" says Beryl.

A successful model of peer support

Specialist Peer Supporters not only share the 'lived experience' of overcoming family violence themselves, they also receive comprehensive training in a successful model of peer support that has been specifically adapted for family violence. 'Lived experience' is a prerequisite to the training together with other personal qualities Beryl identifies as being important. "A person needs to have a good understanding and awareness of self through their own experience of family violence. They also need to have the time and energy to be involved in supporting others."

Research into peer support indicates that when it is coupled with other services, client outcomes are significantly improved. "We're very excited to be the first to offer specialist peer support in the family violence sector" says Nicola, CWR CEO. "With the help of Specialist Peer Support, people can progress from simply surviving safely, to understanding and eventually transcending the trauma of family violence. It is our hope that many Canterbury families will be supported by this specialist service as they journey toward fulfilling, violence-free lives."

van we used to deliver the bread, we also used during the day to pick up the women, children and their belongings. At night we would make bread whilst reading the latest women's lib material from America and discussing all these new ideas. The women's movement of the 70s had an amazing energy."

"We were wicked and provocative – we went where we weren't 'supposed' to go, like the Public Bar of a new tavern" says Rosemary. "They didn't want to serve us, but we kept going back until they did. We just wanted to make a stand and say it wasn't OK to discriminate against women. They couldn't call it a 'Public' Bar but then refuse to serve the public just because they were female."

By 1978, both Diane and Rosemary came to the decision that it was time to move on. "There were a number of Refuges starting up around the country by then and it was a good time to step back and let others step into the breach" says Diane.

Diane and Rosemary are still incredibly passionate about Christchurch Women's Refuge and the work it does today. Thanks to their courage and determination we now openly talk about family violence and services extend far beyond providing a temporary safe haven. Government runs national campaigns on family violence, Police actively and routinely intervene in incidents and agencies like CWR not only help children and women remain safely at home, but work with men who perpetrate violence.

That's a wonderful legacy to have handed on, and it's a heritage we're proud to embrace.



'The Originals' Diane Shannon (left) and Rosemary Howard (right) as they are today, still incredibly passionate about CWR and the vision for a violence free future

MAY DAY MAY DAY – An Army of Collectors Required!

Every year we hit the streets during our Annual Appeal with dozens of supporters like YOU, to raise money to support women, children and men to leave family violence behind. Our Annual Street Appeal this year is on **Friday 17 and Saturday 18 May** – and we need as many troops as we can muster on the streets and into malls, supermarkets and service stations!

You'll be armed with an official Collector's Bucket and thank-you stickers, and you'll also need plenty of big smiles as you collect donations from the many generous Cantabrians who are keen to support families and individuals overcome family violence.

Can you be a part of this dedicated army of collectors, who will be spread across Christchurch, Kaiapoi, Rolleston and Rangiora? It is a great opportunity not only to raise money, but to raise awareness about family violence as an important social issue that we can all do something about.

If you, your staff, colleagues, friends or family can spare a couple of hours on

Friday 17 or Saturday 18 May, we'd love to hear from you.

There are three ways to register as an official collector:

- fill out the Collector Application form on our website (www.womensrefuge.co.nz),
- email us at enquiries@womensrefuge.co.nz,
- call us on 353 7400

And yes, we've moved the date from July! The appeal is now timed to take place in the same week as International Families Day, in recognition of the importance of families in overcoming family violence, whether together or apart.

Buckets of Support

The many generous donations we receive in our Annual Appeal – and from supporters throughout the year – make a tangible, practical difference in the lives of over 1,200 women, children and men year. Every cent (and note!) you give helps to make their move towards violence-free futures possible.

Take a look at the change you can make:

- \$25 buys the petrol to collect children for an education group and return them to school
- \$50 helps provide resources for a 10-week children's education group
- \$75 will help provide a week of food, nappies, baby food and toiletries for the Safe House
- \$110 covers Safe House rent for one week
- \$150 will our provide 24-hour support from our support and information line
- \$350 provides electricity to keep families in the Safe House warm for one month
- \$500 provides 12 months' access to a free-phone for men who want to overcome family violence
- \$1,200 pays for a woman or child to undertake a life-changing 10-week education programme



11-month-old Sam gets behind our Annual Street Appeal



When Things Go Pear-Shaped, Where's a Bloke to Go?

Finding safe, affordable accommodation in Christchurch is a scary prospect. For a man who is prohibited from going home by a Police Safety Order (PSO) or Protection Order, or who chooses to step back for some space, finding somewhere to go can be a very daunting challenge.

Thanks to the Community Internship programme run by the Department of Internal Affairs (DIA), CWR's ReachOut Men's Services division is now exploring temporary accommodation options available for men in those situations. Ashley Seaford from the Ministry of Social Development has been seconded to a six-month position with Christchurch Women's Refuge to undertake the scoping project.

"We know that men often return to the family home despite a PSO or a Protection Order being in place" says Ashley. "We want to understand the dynamics around why this happens. Once we understand the current options available – and the gaps – we will be better able to support men to prevent violence from escalating. It's another tool to support families determine their own pathway and to begin the journey to become and remain violence-free."

Accommodation support for men could enhance the effectiveness of existing safety tools, such as PSOs, and thereby improve the safety and wellbeing of women and children. Ashley's review and recommendations are due in September this year.

ReachOut Branches Out

The ReachOut early intervention service for men began in North Canterbury in April 2012 amidst much hope and expectation about its potential. One year on and dozens of men are being supported by the service, which has recently received confirmation of continued and extended funding to see the service begin supporting men in Christchurch city.



Family violence specialist
Matiu Cheesman

ReachOut is offered to men, by men. The service challenges and supports men to address their family violence and break the cycle of abusive behaviour in

their intimate and family relationships. ReachOut is without doubt the success that was hoped for by the collaboration of agencies which joined to support CWR develop this service. In early 2013, the opportunity to extend ReachOut into

the larger Christchurch area was secured through a grant from the Ministry of Social Development (MSD). MSD has committed to funding the continuation of the ReachOut Family Support Worker in North Canterbury, and to another new position, enabling the service to extend into Christchurch.

A great deal of ReachOut's success is due to the hard work and dedication of our family violence specialist Matiu Cheesman, whose engagement with men at the point of family violence crisis has generated an overwhelming response. Matiu makes contact with men within days of them being named on Police Incident Reports and Police safety Orders in North Canterbury.

He offers individual support to address their behaviour, access to specialist education programmes and other agencies within the family violence sector.

The extension of ReachOut into Christchurch will work alongside our current services for women and children to build a more cohesive and integrated family violence service for families, one founded on the belief that everyone can overcome family violence if offered the right support at the right time in the right way.

Our sincere thanks also go to the Ministry of Social Development; together with the Tindall Foundation; the Todd Foundation and the Hugh Green Foundation for supporting ReachOut to branch out.

Fun & Games to Raise Funds for Canterbury Families!

Thanks to some local ingenuity and community spirit, families affected by family violence will now benefit from sales of the Christchurch-inspired board game Quakes and Ladders.

Christchurch resident Siobhan Grimshaw created Quakes and Ladders – a twist on the traditional Snakes and Ladders – in December 2012 as a lighter-hearted memento of the post-earthquake drama and trauma many Canterbury people have been through, and are still experiencing.

The game was born of Siobhan's own – and her friends and families' – frustration in trying to move ahead with their lives while battling earthquake-related red tape. Having read about the effect of the earthquakes on levels and severity of family violence, Siobhan contacted Christchurch Women's Refuge to offer all profits from sales to support services to individuals and families overcoming family violence.

Playing pieces include 'nuts and bolts' in keeping with the rebuild theme, with upward Ladders such as 'Scope of Works Completed' and downward Quakes such as 'Insurance Company Restructures' – all terms familiar to many Cantabrians. However, the game is fun

for anyone, anywhere. It is being sold online and through several local retailers including Casual and Country Homestore in Ferrymead. Z stations throughout Canterbury will also retail the game with no mark-up in the lead-up to holidays such as Easter, Queen's Birthday and Christmas.

Blacks' Fasteners, Office Max, Warehouse Stationery and Fotocopy at Ferrymead, have all donated items or services to produce and package the game. Thanks to their support, previous production costs have been dramatically reduced so that now over 75% of the \$20 retail price will go directly to Christchurch Women's Refuge.

Check out your local Z station or go online (quakesandladders.co.nz) to buy your copy of the game, or one for a gift.

They are so easy to post!



"... [without change] I would be missing out on the two most important things in my life, which are my wife and my son. Watching my son grow and learn. And, you know, my wife's smile. She has just got the most amazing smile, which I never saw for – well, I saw briefly and then I lost it completely for years. And it has started to come back... that is something that I never realised."

(Male, 35 years old, journeying away from family violence) – The Families Commission Formative Research Report

Like us on Facebook



Christchurch Women's Refuge and ReachOutCanterbury have Facebook pages! Check us out and 'Like' us to keep up to date on what each service area is doing and to share your thoughts with us.

Thanks for Supporting Canterbury Families

We always have so many wonderful people to thank! Firstly, we want to acknowledge the generous community groups and funders who continue to show trust in our services as a way to improve the lives of people in our community.

Recent grants received have contributed to:

- ReachOut early intervention service for men – the Tindall Foundation
- Examination of temporary accommodation options for men – Department of Internal Affairs
- Safe House and Rural Support Workers' wages – Pub Charity
- Christchurch city client support staff wages – Southern Trust
- Residential Safe House operating costs – Christchurch Casino Charitable Trust
- Group education and Police report follow-up – Department of Internal Affairs (COGS)
- Development of Peer Support – Canterbury Social Support Fund

Companies and Community Group Donations:

- ReachOut and Shine safe@home – Rotary Club of Avonhead
- Shine safe@home – Zonta Club of Christchurch South and Inner Wheel Otautahi
- General operating costs – the Jones Foundation

Christmas Support

In this edition of The Advocate we want to express a huge thanks to **everyone** who made Christmas so much happier for so many families. You literally inundated us with gifts and food to pass on to families and it was wonderful! Don't worry, we made sure it all got out to people who needed and appreciated it. Special thanks to:

- Curves Barrington
- Christchurch Hospital Pharmacy
- Christchurch City Council
- Aria Farms
- Crisco and Courier Post
- KB Toys
- KidsFirst St Albans
- Stronger Canterbury Infrastructure Rebuild Team (SCIRT)

We know we didn't mention every one of you by name, but please know that we – and women, children and men living with family violence – really do appreciate all the support and generosity you give to individuals and families through us.

Receive The Advocate by Email

Please help us reduce costs by choosing to receive The Advocate by email. Contact julie@womensrefuge.co.nz or call (03) 353 7400

"I've been given a new beginning and I'm going to do everything and take it. I'm going to run the right way and I'm going to keep on running because I know I'm worth something."

(CWR client Anna, aged 25 years, North & South Magazine, Nov 2008)



IT IS OK TO ASK FOR HELP

CUT ALONG THE LINE 

Join the journey to a violence free society

Charities Commission Number CC 30026

Mr/Mrs/Miss/Ms/Other _____

Name _____

Address _____

Phone _____

Email _____

Please add me to the email distribution list.

Please post to:

Christchurch Women's Refuge Inc., PO Box 32 034, Christchurch 8147

Here is my donation of \$200 \$150 \$75 \$25

Other amount (please enter) \$ _____

Cheque payable to Christchurch Women's Refuge

Or charge my Visa MasterCard Expiry date ____ / ____

Card No.

Name on Card _____

Please send me information about making a gift to Christchurch Women's Refuge in my will

If you wish to discuss a donation or make automatic payments please contact Julie on (03) 353 7400 or at julie@womensrefuge.co.nz
You can donate online at www.womensrefuge.co.nz

Thank you! We will send you a receipt